

Occupy Differently: Space, Community and Urban Counter-Conduct

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Title: OCCUPY DIFFERENTLY: SPACE, COMMUNITY AND URBAN COUNTER-CONDUCT

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ABSTRACT:

This article demonstrates how the concept of counter-conducts helps us understand Occupy by directing attention to the correlation between the way advanced liberalism works to control urban spaces and the way that control is countered through Occupy's tactics. The first section outlines the term counter-conducts by looking to Foucault's short and undeveloped theorisation. The second examines how advanced liberalism conducts conduct through the use of urban space, concentrating on London which comes to form a space of and for the mobility and circulation of goods, people and ideas. Occupy's tactics directly confront and counter such movement while engaging in its own forms of counter-circulation and (im)mobility. The third section examines how advanced liberal techniques have increasingly come to use a particular, heavily instrumentalised understanding of community in order to divide and control urban populations. Occupy's tactics embody versions of community which confront and oppose such instrumentalisation, ultimately both engaging with that control and partially reproducing it. Through these counter-conducts we can come to a view of Occupy as inevitably succeeding in its failure as a movement and failing in its success, while opening to a (im)possible futurity of occupying urban space differently.

Occupy appeared in the late summer of 2011 as a seemingly spontaneous movement to highlight and protest against the crimes and misdemeanours of global capitalism. In fact, Occupy was marked by intense internal diversity of aims, tactics and ideology, yet it captured something of the zeitgeist of the advanced liberal world through its tactic of seizing public space, starting with a general assembly at the iconic Wall Street bull statue.¹ Indeed, from October 2011, it was claimed that over 950 cities in 82 countries worldwide began their own occupations.² There is nothing novel about the tactic of occupying urban space as a form of protest or resistance.³ Yet, most uses of the tactic have a more or less clear cause to promote or goal to achieve. As the use of Occupy's tactics and name began to spread across the world, partly via social media, pressure was thus unsurprisingly placed upon Occupy to identify what precisely it was resisting and what its demands were. Such calls were resisted, partly for practical reasons (as it was marked by openness, diversity and a lack of hierarchical leadership, seeking agreement on a list of demands would have proven impossible), but also on principle. As Judith Butler points out, "any list of demands would not exhaust the ideal of justice that is being demanded"⁴ and risks narrowing the movement's vision.⁵ This refusal is part of Occupy's "political disobedience": by rejecting conventional politics, strategies and discourses, Occupy refuses to be disciplined by conventional forms of resistance and the political.⁶

Yet, while eschewing traditional politics, the question remains as to how precisely Occupy's tactics operate as a form of resistance or counter-conduct. After all, if the aim is to resist or oppose the inequalities generated by global capital, it is unclear how such a thing can be achieved. As the British comedian and satirist Stewart Lee argues, Occupy is "occupying space and time. Well done... But Global Capitalism has moved beyond space and time into a theoretical abstract region unfettered by the laws of either physics or common decency".⁷ While evocative of the apparent futility of localised protest in an age of globalisation, such a blasé treatment is misguided. The significance of the movement's tactics in global cities such as

¹ For a useful timeline, see Jodi Deal, James Martel and Davide Panagia, "Introduction", *Theory and Event*, Vol. 14, No. 4S (2011). This makes clear that the movement was far from completely spontaneous, being in fact well planned in advance.

² Occupytheory, "How Occupy Wall Street Began" (17 February 2014), available: <http://occupytheory.org/how-occupy-wall-street-began/> (accessed 25 February 2014).

³ For examples, see Charlie Hailey, *Camps: A Guide to 21st Century Space* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009) and Anna Feigenbaum, Fabian Franzel and Patrick McCurdy, *Protest Camps* (London: Zed Books, 2013).

⁴ Judith Butler, "For and Against Precarity", *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy*, Issue 1 (December 2011), p. 12

⁵ Judith Butler, "So What Are the Demands? And Where Do They Go From Here?", *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Spring is coming*, Issue 2 (March 2012), p. 9

⁶ Bernard E. Harcourt, "Political Disobedience", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2012), p. 34

⁷ Stuart Lee, "Warriors at the Edge of Time", *Occupied Times* (5 August 2012), available: <http://theoccupiedtimes.co.uk/?p=6385> (accessed 28 February 2013).

London, New York and Hong Kong is that, unlike calls to “Occupy Everything”, these urban spaces are the “core of global financial power”,⁸ the places where global capitalism literally comes down to ground, operating as nodal points of command and control, channelling the flows of global capitalism: of capital, goods, services, commodities, ideas, people and credit.⁹

Such cities and the states they are more or less embedded within do not, however, control these flows purely at the behest of an impersonal force of global capital. Rather, cities have become a complex assemblage of power relations, perhaps best understood as a site or milieu of “advanced liberal” forms of governmentality, a “sort of laboratory of conduct”.¹⁰ The forces and flows of finance are themselves channelled, constrained, regulated, and freed within certain limits, as is the behaviour of the city’s workforce, tourists and citizens. As Foucault argued through his conception of “counter-conduct”, it is always found in correlation with a form of “conduct”, a rationality of government.¹¹ Rather than “global capital” per se, it is precisely these diverse rationalities of advanced liberal governance, operating through mechanisms of security, that I argue Occupy comes to confront and counter in global cities.

But how does such government of conduct work? And where are the points of weakness and contestation where counter-conducts have been generated and exposed by Occupy and its tactics? Reading the *Tidal* publications written from and edited by the Occupiers of Wall Street from 2011-2013, two ideas stressed time and again are “space” and “community”.¹² Space is to be seized or occupied. It is a commons to be retaken, an arena remade into something genuinely public, open and resistive. Revealing a huge debt to Hakim Bey, it is a “zone” to be made

⁸ Elizabeth Cobbett and Randall Germain, “‘Occupy Wall Street’ and IPE: Insights and Implications”, *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, Vol. 5 (2012), p. 111.

⁹ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Second Edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose, “Governing Cities: Notes on the Spatialisation of Virtue”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 17 (1999), p. 740; see also Nikolas Rose, “Governing Cities, Governing Citizens”, in E.F. Isin (ed.), *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City* (London: Routledge, 2000).

¹¹ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76* (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 190.

¹² It should be noted that *Tidal* is only one of many publications that emerged from the Occupy movement and in this sense forms a fairly narrow case. However, these publications were especially thoughtful and, by including many voices, from Anarchism and community organisers to Queer and Postcolonial theorists it managed to encompass a significant range of perspectives. It’s theoretically informed commentaries were also a useful way into the movement, which I was not personally involved in; I came to study of Occupy rather late (in Autumn 2012, after the end of the major Occupations) as part of a broader interest in resistant practices of hospitality in Global Cities. However, it is important to note that *Tidal*’s stress on space and community mirrors that found in ethnographic studies of the movement – see Paul-Francois Tremlett, ‘Occupied Territory at the Interstices of the Sacred: Between Capital and Community’, *Religion and Society: Advances in Research*, Vol. 3 (2012), pp. 130-141; Maple Razsa and Andrej Kurnik, ‘The Occupy Movement in Zizek’s hometown: Direct democracy and a politics of becoming’, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 39 (2012), pp. 238-258; and Jeffrey S. Juris, ‘Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation’, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 39 (2012), pp. 259-279.

temporarily autonomous.¹³ As Thomas Hintze and Laura Gottesdiener put it in notes from Tidal's first issue, "outdoor public spaces embody the heart of this movement".¹⁴ Communities, on the other hand, are either pre-existing (of race and colour, of the homeless, of faiths, of debtors, and so on) and being brought into the movement, or are being made through the forging of new friendships and unexpected contacts that come from protest, resistance and occupation. Open spaces, existing and spontaneous communities are of course crucial elements of cities and the urban, especially what has come to be called the "world city"¹⁵ or "global city".¹⁶ They are part of our theorizations of the city, central to what attracts people to visit, work and live within them,¹⁷ and a core part of cities' narratives and constructions of themselves.¹⁸ Communities and the spatial are also, however, crucial concepts through which the government of conduct within cities comes to be operated and rationalised.

This article aims to demonstrate how the concept of counter-conducts can help us understand Occupy by directing our attention to the correlation between the way advanced liberalism works to control the city and its population, and the way that control is countered (successfully and unsuccessfully, but generally by unsettling these two terms) through Occupy's tactics. It proceeds in three sections. The first section outlines what I understand by the term counter-conducts by looking to Foucault's short and undeveloped theorisation of it. The second section examines how advanced liberalism works to conduct conduct through the use of urban space, concentrating on London, which comes to be a space of and for the mobility and circulation of goods, people, ideas and things. Occupy's tactics directly confront and counter such movement while engaging in its own forms of counter-circulation and (im)mobility. The third section focuses on how advanced liberal techniques have increasingly come to use a particular, heavily instrumentalised understanding of community in order to divide and control urban populations. Occupy's tactics seek to embody and produce versions of community which confront and oppose such an instrumental view while ultimately both engaging with that control and partially reproducing it. Through these counter-conducts then we can come to a view of Occupy as

¹³ Hakim Bey, *TAZ: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1991). This debt is clear in the language of the *Tidal* publications, but also in their structure, using numbered 'communiques' instead of editorials.

¹⁴ Thomas Hintze and Laura Gottesdiener, 'Notes: On Outdoor Space', *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy*, Issue 1 (December 2011), p. 10.

¹⁵ Doreen Massey, *World City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

¹⁶ Sassen, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ See Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005); Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2002); Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (London: Routledge, 2005).

¹⁸ See Dan Bulley, "Conducting Strangers: Hospitality and Governmentality in the Global City", in Gideon Baker (ed.), *Hospitality and World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

inevitably succeeding in its failure as a movement and failing in its success, while opening to a (im)possible futurity of urban space and community.

COUNTER-CONDUCTS

As Carl Death has noted, while a great deal of work exists which employs Foucault's understanding of governmentality to analyse modern forms of power and control, counter-conducts have been given very little attention.¹⁹ Foucault himself gave the concept very little attention, but his interest lies in the way that the "history of government as the 'conduct of conduct' is interwoven with the history of dissenting 'counter-conducts'".²⁰ In expanding on historical uses of the word "conduct", Foucault notes that it generally refers to two things:

Conduct is the activity of conducting (*conduire*), of conduction (*la conduction*) if you like, but it is equally the way in which one conducts oneself (*se conduire*), lets oneself by conducted (*se laisse conduire*), is conducted (*est conduit*), and finally, in which one behaves (*se comporter*) as an effort or form of conduct (*une conduite*) as the action of conducting or of conduction (*conduction*).²¹

Government as conduct is something that appears to be directed towards a subject's behaviour (being conducted) and something a subject employs to direct themselves and their own behaviour (conducting oneself). By looking at the specific development of pastoral power, Foucault notes that 'equally specific' movements and moments of insubordination and resistance arose 'in correlation' with that form of power.²² Running through a range of wider counter-conducts, such as soldiers' desertion and insubordination, medical dissent, secret societies and freemasonry, he claims that the latter pursued "a different form of conduct: to be led differently, by other men, and towards other objectives".²³ These movements, however, are not just directed outward, toward those exercising power as conduct, but also inward, toward the norms and values by which the subject and population conduct themselves.

¹⁹ Carl Death, "Counter-Conducts: A Foucauldian Analytics of Protest", *Social Movement Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2010), p. 239. Two prominent examples are Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (London: Sage, 1999) and Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

²⁰ Colin Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: An Introduction", in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (London: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 5; see also Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

²¹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 194.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

We can also gain some insight on counter-conducts by looking at the other terms Foucault considers and rejects for this resistive action, specifically “revolt” (which he considers “too precise and too strong to designate much more diffuse and subdued forms of resistance”), “disobedience” (which is “too weak” and “negative” to capture the productivity, organisation, solidarity and consistency of resistance); “dissidence” (which he likes, but it demands a “dissident” which fails to capture the role of the delinquent); and “misconduct” (which is too “passive”). In contrast, the term “counter-conduct” implies an active “sense of struggle”, and we can infer is also potentially productive and creative of solidarities, while involving a wide range of techniques and tactics to counter the control exerted through government.²⁴ Though potentially spectacular, counter-conducts can equally be more mundane, subdued, everyday forms of resistance to the way behaviour is conducted.

To return to the analysis of pastoral power, five counter-conducts are drawn out that resist the conduct exercised through the pastorate. Crucially, Foucault notes that,

...the fundamental elements in these counter-conducts are clearly not absolutely external to Christianity, but are actually border-elements, if you like, which have been continually re-utilized, re-implanted, and taken up again in one or another direction... So, if you like, the struggle was not conducted in the form of absolute exteriority, but rather in the form of the permanent use of tactical elements that are pertinent in the anti-pastoral struggle, insofar as they fall within, in a marginal way, the general horizon of Christianity.²⁵

Counter-conducts do not appear in the form of an external, revolutionary force that seeks to overthrow the pastorate and Christianity in its entirety. Rather, they are “border-elements”, immanent critiques, internal but marginal to Christianity. They are both complicit and resistive of pastoral forms of conduct, seeking to reinterpret, redirect and rebalance elements within the form of governmentality concerned. Yet, just as the counter-conducts outlined by Foucault were reincorporated into Christianity (indeed, they were never wholly external to it) either in its subsequent Catholic or Protestant forms, so we can expect counter-conducts to be liable to being “taken up” in such a manner. As Deleuze puts it, protest and government thus become

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-202.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

“mutually constitutive” with resistance always potentially “reinforc[ing] and bolster[ing], as well as *and at the same time as*, undermining and challenging dominant forms” of government.²⁶

We can thus take at least four key points from Foucault’s brief excursus on counter-conducts. First, they are always linked to specific forms of conduct, particular operations of governmentality. Second, they are directed outward, countering those conducting populations and individuals, but also inward, resisting and reassessing the norms, principles and values by which those populations and individuals conduct, understand and identify themselves. Third, counter-conduct is an active, creative, diverse but not *necessarily* spectacular or ground-breaking set of tactics employed in a struggle against distinct operations of power and control. Fourth, counter-conducts are forces and tendencies that emerge from within, but are marginal to, the form of conduct examined. They tend to both bolster and undermine that which they oppose. If we are to examine how Occupy works as a counter-conduct movement then, we must start with the forms of conduct they seek to counter. Rather than the impersonal forces of “global capital” we must ask: what tactics, techniques and strategies of government does Occupy stand in opposition to? How do their own tactics of protest stand in relation to that government? And in what ways is that opposition co-opted, reinterpreted and “taken up” by the conduct they oppose?

SPATIAL COUNTER-CONDUCTS: CIRCULATION & OCCUPATION

Steven Pile argues that the heart of resistance is always “questions of spatiality – the politics of lived spaces”,²⁷ a claim borne out by Occupy. While Occupy has engaged in a range of resistance tactics, its hallmark is the seizure of predominantly urban space.²⁸ The Reverend Giles Fraser, briefly a hero of Occupy LSX (London Stock Exchange) and now a regular *Guardian* columnist, notes that “Occupy is stubbornly about the physical reality of space”.²⁹ As characterised in Tidal’s first publication, Occupy is a “radical people’s occupation of public space”,³⁰ in which

²⁶ Death, *op. cit.*, p. 240. Emphasis in original.

²⁷ Steven Pile, “Introduction: Opposition, Political Identities and Spaces of Resistance”, in Steven Pile and Michael Keith (eds.), *Geographies of Resistance* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 27.

²⁸ For a variety of other ways in which the spaces of Occupy have been mapped, see Matthew Sparke, ‘From Global Dispossession to Local Repossession: Towards a Worldly Cultural Geography of Occupy Activism’, in Nuala C. Johnson, Richard H. Schein and Jamie Winders (eds), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 387-408.

²⁹ Giles Fraser, “Occupy LSX may be gone, but the movement won’t be forgotten”, *The Guardian* (28 February), available: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/feb/28/occupy-london-gone-not-forgotten> (accessed 28 February 2013).

³⁰ Conor Tomas Reed, “Step 1: Occupy Universities. Step 2: Transform Them”, *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy*, Issue 1 (December 2011), p. 4

“space is not a mere necessity – a place to lay our head, to eat our meals, to congregate and assemble – it is also a symbol and a direct action.”³¹ The symbolism of outdoor space is because it is “public, transparent, inclusive and collective”, in direct opposition to the symbolism of “Wall Street”, which is private, secretive, exclusive and elitist. The purpose of space has been re-imagined to help the homeless and mentally ill, to make it “serve human needs, not corporate greed”.³² Space is thus crucial to Occupy, and each element of these claims about the repurposing of space could perhaps be examined as a counter-conduct. However, my focus is on the way this occupation opposes particular tactics of advanced liberal government. And it is interesting that none of these representations reflect the importance of the *urban* or the *global urban* in their understandings of the space to be occupied. The reason Zucotti Park (or “Liberty Plaza”), St. Paul’s Cathedral, the HSBC Building in Hong Kong are important spaces is because they are close to their target: “Wall Street” and its global representatives in Corporate Hong Kong and the LSX. Such a targeting of space arguably proved a “significant innovation” in global activism.³³ There appears to be nothing special about urban space *in itself*. In contrast, I want to argue that the urban is a crucial element in understanding occupation as a counter-conduct.

GOVERNING SPATIAL URBAN CONDUCT

Nikolas Rose observes that cities have, for at least two centuries, acted as “both a problem for government and a permanent incitement to government”, their opaqueness, density, spontaneity and apparent ungovernability producing a pluralisation in the tactics and techniques of conducting conduct.³⁴ Indeed, this diffusion now means those various “governmentalities” have become “implicit in urbanism as a way of life”.³⁵ A focus on the role that community plays in this diversity of government will be the subject of the next section, but here I want to look at the spatial aspect of governing cities. While the surveillance of a space involves it being closed, bordered, fixed and observable, the regulation of a space through conduct takes a far more liberal form: the emphasis is on open spaces, “making possible, guaranteeing, and ensuring circulations: the circulation of people, merchandise, and air, etcetera”.³⁶ Though Occupy stresses its own use of space as open, characterised by the tearing down of boundaries,³⁷ this is not in fact an opposition to the way industrialised cities, their goods, vehicles and citizens, are conducted. A

³¹ Hintze and Gottesdiener, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

³² Rira, “Matrix as the Core Element”, *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy*, Issue 1 (December 2011), p. 17.

³³ Sparke, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

³⁴ Rose, “Governing Cities, Governing Citizens”, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

³⁵ Warren Magnusson, *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing Like a City* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 24.

³⁶ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

³⁷ See Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

conducted space, unlike a space of discipline, emphasises the necessity of freedom, the encouragement of mobility and circulation. The aim is to “govern *through* rather than *in spite* of individual liberty”.³⁸ Thus the dominant logic of this conduct is not one of discipline, but one of security. Mechanisms of security work to organize the circulation within a space, “eliminating its dangerous elements, making a division between good and bad circulation, and maximising the good circulation by diminishing the bad”.³⁹ Security is thus about the optimization of a certain state of life, rather than prohibition and denial.⁴⁰

Cities work through their spatial planning and strategising to produce, secure and govern themselves as spaces of efficient and easily circulating movement and consumption. One of the key hallmarks of global cities for Sassen is that they are themselves important markets for the innovative services they produce.⁴¹ They are ‘generators of demand’, exercising economic power of “consumption and circulation”.⁴² Indeed, according to Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz, four key elements mark out a city as an important site for these activities: a variety of services and consumer goods – such as restaurants, theatres, and the like; the aesthetics of its physical space – is it a nice place to “be”; good public services; and finally the speed of moving around the city – the extent and efficiency of the mobility that is enabled.⁴³ This is the state of life – of mobility, circulation and consumption of goods, ideas, people and things – that the security mechanisms of the advanced liberal global city seek to optimize.

As I’ve argued elsewhere,⁴⁴ London’s spatial planning (as well as its economic, tourist and cultural operations) aims to produce and govern itself precisely as a mobile zone of consumption. However, it is not all of “London” that is constructed in this way. Rather, in London’s spatial plan, published by the Office of Mayor Boris Johnson in 2009, it is what they term the “central activities zone”, or CAZ,⁴⁵ an area carefully delimited from deprived and desolate “Inner London”, and suburban “Outer London”. This zone is deemed central in several important ways; it is London’s “geographic, economic and administrative core”; it contains the “largest concentration of London’s financial and globally oriented business services”;⁴⁶ but also

³⁸ Osborne and Rose, *op. cit.*, 741.

³⁹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 246.

⁴¹ Sassen, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

⁴² Amin and Thrift, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

⁴³ E. Glaeser, J. Kolko and A. Saiz, ‘Consumer City’, *Journal of Economic Geography*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2001), pp. 27-50.

⁴⁴ Bulley, ‘Conducting Strangers’, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ See Map 2.2 in Mayor of London, *The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London*, consultation draft replacement plan (London: Greater London Authority, 2009), p. 36.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

“embraces much of what is recognized around the world as iconic London”, making it the “world’s leading visitor destination”.⁴⁷ The idea of the CAZ as the key space of consumption is emphasised by the London Plan’s differential classification of “town centres”, “night time econom[ies] of strategic importance” and “strategic cultural areas” available in London. These are all divided into different types, with those of “international importance”, which are “globally renowned”, separated from the metropolitan or “district” centres of much lesser importance. Unsurprisingly, all the internationally important town centres and night time centres (bars, restaurants, night clubs, venues, etc.) are inside the CAZ, as are all but two of the strategic cultural areas.⁴⁸

The London Plan demonstrates the range of mundane, everyday tactics – from the planning and licensing of homes, hotels, leisure facilities, roads and transport links, to the production of tourist brochures, guides and international advertising of the City – used to direct the movement of people, goods and things into and around the CAZ. Importantly, all major rail links – especially the new schemes proposed in the Plan – originate and terminate here. This effectively enhances the efficiency of circulation within and between the CAZ and other zones, but always in reference to the CAZ – getting to, from or around this zone of consumption, distribution and exchange as quickly as possible. Thus, when we speak of “London” as a global city, what we are most clearly talking about is the CAZ – this small section of London deemed crucial to the performance and optimization of an efficient and productive way of life.

Of course, this is not to suggest that mobility and circulation in central London, Manhattan, Hong Kong or any other global city is completely free. We are, of course, being conducted into certain areas and away from others, towards zones of consumption and away from less “gentrified” areas. Yet, not all people are being conducted in the same way. Not all circulations are good. As noted earlier, security mechanisms work to both increase the good circulation *and* diminish the bad. Thus we have the everyday use of methods to prevent certain forms of circulation and unexpected encounter that characterise the urban,⁴⁹ such as by keeping vagrants away from central areas of cities, enforcing dress codes in venues, and the use of traffic signals, congestion zones and bus lanes. The more spectacular and directed security mechanisms have

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁸ See Map 4.2 and Map 4.3, *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

⁴⁹ See Andy Merrifield’s Lefebvre-inspired account of the urban as the dynamic social relations of ‘encounter’ – ‘The Urban Question under Planetary Urbanization’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Vol. 37 (2014), p. 916.

been outlined by Jon Coaffee, with the planning and building of defensive landscapes within cities such as the “ring of steel” or “ring of concrete”.⁵⁰ These practices were on special display during the 2012 Olympics in London, a mega-event which was pre-secured through careful plans to promote and prevent circulation.⁵¹

OCCUPATION AS SPATIAL COUNTER-CONDUCT

If conduct is conducted within global cities through the promotion of good (and diminishment of bad) circulation and mobility within gentrified and commercialised areas, Occupy (or at least the urban occupations of Wall Street, London and Hong Kong) targets those areas in order to do the opposite. Occupy dwells in and seizes space in order to halt, to simple “be”, and thereby *not* circulate, *not* consume. This does not, however, make it passive (something which I earlier noted may rule it out from being a counter-conduct). This is an active *not*, directed very much counter to the activities that are meant to be taking place in areas such as the central London, Hong Kong and Manhattan. After all, in a sense it takes more effort and discomfort *not* to move, to simply allow oneself to *be* in these areas, than it does to move, circulate and consume. Living with several thousand protestors on concrete, outdoors, for two months (New York), four months (London), or several more under a covered plaza (Hong Kong) is hard work and requires exceptional organisation and planning.⁵² Not only is this material reality challenging, the biological necessities of simply being (like sleeping and defecating) become illegal when performed on urban streets.⁵³ Meanwhile, Occupiers struggled with mental and physical health and security, drunkenness, drug abuse, money and boredom.⁵⁴

But occupation is also active because this is a performative form of resistance; as the occupier Marina Sitrin puts it, “[w]hat we are doing and how we are doing it are inextricably linked”.⁵⁵ It is a performance that does not *do* anything much beyond occupying space that is *meant* to be open for specific forms of mobility, for moving to and from places of consumption. Such a bending of of spaces toward a practice for which they are not intended is key to the writings of the mid-20th century French revolutionaries, the Situationists, who have been important to the

⁵⁰ Jon Coaffee, *Terrorism, Risk and the Global City: Towards Urban Resilience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), p. 112 and p. 240.

⁵¹ See Dan Bulley and Debbie Lisle, “Welcoming the World: governing Hospitality in London’s 2012 Olympic Bid”, *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2012), pp. 186-204.

⁵² See Feigenbaum et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 182-218.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 57

⁵⁴ Tremlett, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

⁵⁵ Marina Sitrin, “Pulling the Emergency Break”, *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Spring is coming*, Issue 2 (March 2012), p. 6.

tactics of Occupy Wall Street.⁵⁶ Unlike the Situationists however, revolution is not an agreed stated aim of Occupy. Rather, Occupy “says something by doing something”.⁵⁷ Its stopping, singing, dancing, chanting, drumming, discussing, teaching, leafleting, praying, meditating and tweeting, its dwelling and “being there” is disruptive without needing to enact any form of disruption beyond that different way of being. It is not, as Cobbett and Germain suggest,⁵⁸ like the “Stop the City” demonstrations in London in 1983 and 1984, which literally sought to prevent the circulation and mobility of capitalism by blockading the financial district. Rather, it is a critical, resistant counter-conduct in Foucault’s sense of critique, which aims ‘not to be governed *like that*, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures’.⁵⁹

While not rigidly applying the elements of counter-conduct drawn out above, we can see that Occupy’s tactic of stopping and dwelling differently can be seen in these terms. It is linked to specific (spatial, urban) governmentalities; it is directed outward to those conducting the Occupiers but also inward toward the principles, norms and values of advanced liberalism. Tidal’s first “Communiqué”, in the abstract poetics reminiscent of Bey, talks about being “born into a world of ghosts and illusions” which form our desires, interests and values: “That is why we seek to occupy. We seek to rediscover and reclaim the world”.⁶⁰ I am not sure that we can put too much weight on this intentionality and the necessity of the internal, but as conducts always operate by oneself, on oneself, so do the counter-conducts. Occupy’s techniques are not necessarily spectacular or revolutionary. Sometimes they are for sure, and indeed this is part of the global spreading of the Occupy ‘brand’ that concerns some.⁶¹ But they need not be, and the quiet, patient, episodic and targeted work of Occupy (which will be mentioned later) that has continued since the destruction of the Zucotti Park camp is evidence of this.⁶²

But crucially, we must also remember that counter-conducts tend to both bolster and undermine the conduct they are linked to.⁶³ In this way, Occupy is never entirely external to the capitalism and advanced liberalism it counters. After all, “Occupations are about bodies; bodies ‘being’ and

⁵⁶ McKenzie Wark, “This Shit is Fucked Up and Bullshit”, *Theory and Event*, Vol. 14, No. 4S (2011).

⁵⁷ W.J.T. Mitchell, “Occupy: Three Inquiries in Disobedience”, *Critique Inquiry*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2012), p. 15.

⁵⁸ Cobbett and Germain, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111.

⁵⁹ Michel Foucault, “What is Critique?”, in *The Politics of Truth* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), p. 44.

⁶⁰ *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy*, Issue 1 (December 2011), p. 3.

⁶¹ See Suzahn Ebrahimian, “The Revolution Will Not Have a Bottom Line”, *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Year II*, Issue 3 (September 2012), p. 9.

⁶² See *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Block by block*, Issue 4 (February 2013).

⁶³ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population, op. cit.*, pp. 214-215; *Death, op. cit.*, p. 236.

bodies staying and claiming space and change”.⁶⁴ As bodies, occupiers have material requirements, of food, drink, shelter, warmth. Beyond these necessities, protestors have made strategic use of technologies, computers, Starbucks wifi, internet hook-ups provided by Apple, and signed contracts with a local UPS store for mail delivery.⁶⁵ These enable communication and the spreading of knowledge, ideas and information through the transnational network of occupations. But they also require participation and a literal buying into the global capitalism that they are ostensibly resisting,⁶⁶ especially because they are resisting within a global city. This has led to simplistic and fatuous critique from right wing and liberal media and politicians.⁶⁷ But an opt-out here is not possible, and it is surely the case that most Occupiers are criticising capitalism and advanced liberalism from within, rather than from an external position which proposes a whole new system.

Cities also require the open public spaces which are aesthetically pleasing and improve one’s quality of life, as suggested earlier. Without such open, appealing spaces, spaces precisely like that outside St. Paul’s or Zucotti Park, cities would not be able to attract the talented “creative classes” and their businesses which they require to perpetuate and reproduce themselves as global cities.⁶⁸ The openness and hospitality of public space is therefore a necessary part of what it is to be an urban nodal point of command and control within global capitalism. But this openness is precisely what Occupy takes advantage of and redirects. Conversely, this is also what makes Occupy both resistive and compliant at the same time – it makes use of the advanced liberal techniques of government, the freedom and open spaces they allow, in order to subvert them in a minor way through counter-conducts – dwelling, “being there”, rather than circulating; a social movement characterised by immobility.⁶⁹

Likewise, many occupiers also take part in the local and global mobility and circulations made possible by advanced liberalism. Occupiers may move at different speeds and times, by different methods and for different reasons to businessmen, tourists, labourers and economic migrants. But they circulate all the same, as do the ideas, tactics, knowledge and material infrastructure of

⁶⁴ Cobbett and German, *op. cit.*, p. 211; Judith Butler, “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street”, Speech at the EIPCP, Vienna (2011), available: <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en/print> (accessed 15 March 2013).

⁶⁵ Harcourt, *op. cit.*, p. 42; Feigenbaum et al., *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁶⁶ Wanda Vradi, “Mic Check/Reality Check”, *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, Issue 5 (2012), p. 122.

⁶⁷ For example, see George Igler, “Coffee and Capitalism: why drinking a cup of coffee does delegitimise Occupy London”, *The Commentator* (7 November, 2011), available: http://www.thecommentator.com/article/610/coffee_and_capitalism_why_drinking_a_cup_of_coffee_does_delegitimise_occupy_london (accessed 1 March 2014).

⁶⁸ Florida, *op. cit.* and Bulley, “Conducting Strangers”, *op. cit.*

⁶⁹ W.J.T. Mitchell, “Image, Space, Revolution: The Arts of Occupation”, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2012), p. 13.

occupation (tents, books, cooking equipment) from occupation to occupation, protest camp to protest camp within the same city, and from continent to continent.⁷⁰ Celebrity academics, such as Judith Butler and Slavoj Žižek circulate globally addressing occupations in just this manner. Yet this is the advantage of considering Occupy as operating through counter-conducts, rather than some kind of pure revolutionary force. Occupy makes use of the tendencies within the government of cities themselves, the tendency to govern *through* freedom. Such conduct allows for different types, rhythms, times and paces of movement. Thus Occupy, post-Zucotti, is operating through what Butler calls “episodic and targeted” squatting, aimed at corporate and state buildings (including health care companies that fail to provide services to the poor, universities that operate purely for profit, banks that exploit the vulnerable); spaces wherever “radical inequality” raises its head.⁷¹ Nina Mehta echoes this, arguing that the absence of Zucotti has allowed a movement beyond the familiar for protestors. This has produced Occupy Town Square, a mobile and brief occupation of public spaces using “temporary assembly points” (such as Washington Square Park in January 2012), moving from borough to borough, linking up and amplifying local campaigns, such as Sunset Park Rent Strike and Cop Watch projects.⁷² While the spectacular, media soaked spaces of the Zucotti Park and St Paul’s Cathedral camps may have disappeared, Mehta argues that Occupy Town Square has “facilitated a network of interconnected spaces and conversations” where learning and listening can take place across the city.⁷³ The space of the city and its place within global capital flows is thus being bolstered and reworked through the counter-conduct of Occupy.

COMMUNITY COUNTER-CONDUCTS: INSTRUMENTAL & EXPERIMENTAL

Community is a crucial aspect of what Occupy claims to be “doing”. An occupier in the first Tidal edition notes the aim of “rebuilding ourselves by building a community of liberty”, stressing the role that autonomy must play in new community zones⁷⁴ and further demonstrating the influence of Bey’s idea of TAZ. An emphasis is placed on reaching out to and making contact with other communities, such as “communities of color”,⁷⁵ the homeless and mentally

⁷⁰ Feigenbaum et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

⁷¹ Butler, “So What Are the Demands?”, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁷² Nina Mehta, “Notes: Where Are We? Who Are We? Occupy, Space, and Community”, *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Year II*, Issue 3 (September 2012), p. 21. For more information on Occupy Town Square, see their Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/occupytownsq> (last accessed 22 June, 2015). This group no longer appears active, its last Facebook post (and tweet) appearing in August 2014.

⁷³ Mehta, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁷⁴ Suzahn E., “An Occupier’s Note”, *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy*, Issue 1 (December 2011), p. 7.

⁷⁵ Mutant Legal, “Notes: On Political Repression, Jail Support, and Radical Care”, *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Year II*, Issue 3 (September 2012), pp. 18-19.

ill,⁷⁶ as well as providing aid and sustenance for the victims of Hurricane Sandy on the Rockaway Peninsula.⁷⁷ Developing and organising the community angle of Occupy is even described as a way of overcoming the movement's apparent "impasse" by 2013.⁷⁸ However, though central the notion of community being used is often underexplored and underexamined both by occupiers and analysts. It appears to be about *real* connections between people, organised horizontally or not organised at all, who would not normally or necessarily come into contact as equals in an urban context. But what form of conduct is this responding to and resisting? How is community used to conduct conduct in an urban environment?

CONDUCTING (THROUGH) COMMUNITY

Community has, for some time now, been conceived as both a territory within which conduct operates and a *means of* government.⁷⁹ As Rose points out, community has been an important political concept, used in resistance and critique for decades; "it becomes governmental, however, when it becomes technical".⁸⁰ We see this move as community is slowly transformed in advanced liberal societies of North America, Western Europe and Australia from the 1960s onwards into an "expert discourse and professional vocation". For example, it becomes something to be programmed and developed (Community Development Programmes and Officers); something to be guarded (Community Safety Programmes and Neighbourhood Watch schemes); something to be policed (Community Policing); something to be tended to and cared for (Community Health Programmes); something to be known (through community studies). From a potential opposition to the state and society, communities "became zones to be investigated, mapped, classified, documented, interpreted" such that an individual's conduct "is now to be made intelligible in terms of the beliefs and values of 'their community'".⁸¹

These beliefs, values and principles have become all important for conducting conduct. The attempt to know community and govern through it is not pitched in a language of control, but rather freedom and choice. And with that freedom comes responsibility. As Osborne and Rose put it, this is a two-fold process of "autonomization" (making the community free to pursue its

⁷⁶ Rira, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁷⁷ Nastaran Mohrit, "On the Margins of Disaster, Revolutionary Acts of Care", *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Block by block*, Issue 4 (February 2013), pp. 24-25.

⁷⁸ Shyam Khanna, "Mississippi Goddam: SNCC, Occupy, and Radical Community Organizing", *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Block by block*, Issue 4 (February 2013), pp. 12-13.

⁷⁹ See Nikolas Rose, "The Death of the Social? Refiguring the Territory of Government", *Economy and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (1996), pp. 327-356; Nikolas Rose, "Community, Citizenship, and the Third Way", *American Behavioural Scientist*, Vol. 43, No. 9 (2000), pp. 1395-1411; Miller and Rose, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ Rose, "The Death of the Social?", *op. cit.*, p. 332.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

own ends, aims and values) and “responsibilization” (making the community responsible for reaching those ends, for controlling and mastering itself according to its own norms, values and principles).⁸² This makes for a more efficient system of government and control because through community development, policing, knowledge production, citizenship training,⁸³ volunteering,⁸⁴ resilience drills and education campaigns,⁸⁵ communities govern themselves and their individuals’ own conduct within the boundaries of the normal, acceptable and desirable. These communities are now responsible for their own welfare, health, security, resilience, homelessness, and juvenile delinquency. If there is a rise in crime, vagrancy, disease, obesity or rioting, a tardiness in bouncing back from a flood or hurricane, this is the community’s responsibility and something *it* must put right, and in the right way. Community is thereby turned into a means of government via what Rose calls an “ethopolitics”,⁸⁶ as it targets an individual and community in their ethos, their way of being in a Heideggerian sense of a “way of life and behaviour characteristic of a habitual dwelling place”.⁸⁷ Rather than trying to create new values to be internalised and used to govern ourselves, ethopolitics seeks to take the forces that bind individuals into groups – forces and feelings like shame, guilt, honour, obligation, responsibility – and “redirect” them, to “intensify the virtuous consequences of such bindings” such as belonging, mutuality and cooperation in order to make those individuals and groups responsible for themselves.⁸⁸

Ethopolitics is certainly not restricted to the government of urban communities alone.⁸⁹ But this instrumentalisation of community has nonetheless become central to governing municipalities.⁹⁰ What makes it particularly enticing in the urban context is that the city space is often conceived as ungovernable, as having “no completeness, no centre, no fixed parts... an amalgam of often disjointed processes and social heterogeneity”.⁹¹ How can order and control be brought to such a

⁸² Osborne and Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 751.

⁸³ Dan Bulley and Bal Sokhi-Bulley, “Big Society as Big Government: Cameron’s Governmentality Agenda”, *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2014), pp. 452-470.

⁸⁴ Suzan Ilcan and Tanya Basok, “Community Government: Voluntary Agencies, Social Justice, and the Responsibilization of Citizens”, *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2004), pp. 129-144.

⁸⁵ Dan Bulley, “Governing Community (Through) Resilience”, *Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (2013), pp. 265-275.

⁸⁶ See Rose, “The death of the social?”, *op. cit.* and “Community, Citizenship, and the Third Way”, *op. cit.*

⁸⁷ Louiza Odysseos, *The Subject of Co-Existence: Otherness in International Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), p. 128.

⁸⁸ Rose, “Community, Citizenship, and the Third Way”, *op. cit.*, p. 1399; Rose, “The death of the social?”, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Nikolas Rose, “Government and Control”, *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 40 (2000), pp. 321-399; Jonathan Xavier Inda, *Targeting Immigrants: Government, Technology, and Ethics* (Blackwell: Oxford, 2006); Suzan Ilcan and Anita Lacey, *Governing the Poor: Exercises of Poverty Reduction and Practices of Global Aid* (London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011); Dan Bulley, “Inside the Tent: Community and Government in Refugee Camps”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (2014), pp. 63-80.

⁹⁰ Engin F. Isin, “Governing Toronto Without Government: Liberalism and Neoliberalism”, *Studies in Political Economy*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (1998), p. 177; Osborne and Rose, *op. cit.*

⁹¹ Amin and Thrift, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

space? Martin Kornberger, who charts the rise of urban “strategies” for global cities such as London, New York and Sydney, notes that such strategies manage the urban public through fragmenting it into communities:

Politically speaking, assembling the public as communities has two effects. First, it homogenizes parts of the population and glosses over the differences between them by labelling them as a community. Does the gay community, for example, not portray a false unity among a rather diverse set of subcultures? Second, it undermines the building of solidarity between diverse groups. By dividing the population into communities, it stops them from engaging with each other and discovering common platforms for joint action.⁹²

These grand city strategies divide up the urban population so that it can be managed more efficiently, while overlaying and effacing conflicts and differences with the “big picture”. Meanwhile, those communities will (hopefully) continue to police, govern and secure themselves, ensuring their survival and future welfare.⁹³ Of course, what makes this tactic of government so appealing is the fact that almost everyone agrees that communities are a “good”, appearing to be pre-existing, natural, neutral and pre-political.⁹⁴ This “seeming naturalness” thus facilitates an ethopolitics that relies on a highly instrumentalised account of community, an account that puts community to work as an efficient, effective means of conducting an unruly space and population.

COMMUNITY AS EXPERIMENTAL COUNTER-CONDUCT?

As we have observed, counter-conducts are always linked to specific tactics of government, so it is no surprise that Occupy has placed an emphasis on re-envisioning community, continually stressing the resistive quality of the communities they form. Indeed, while Occupy’s primary tactic is one of dwelling in a space intended for movement and circulation, any form of dwelling is active and important necessities of co-existence emerge through communal eating, health care, sharing ideas, education and the reaching of decisions through general assemblies open to anyone.⁹⁵ A map of the Occupy LSX camp shows the full range of communal activities involved in this version of dwelling and occupying, with space set aside for shared technology, first aid,

⁹² Martin Kornberger, “Governing the City: From Planning to Urban Strategy”, *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2012), p. 100.

⁹³ Isin, *op. cit.*, p. 173

⁹⁴ Ilcan and Basok, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁹⁵ Harcourt, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

the newspaper (Occupied Times), meditation, recycling, music, “tea and empathy”, a library, art gallery, cinema, a university, welfare tent, a kitchen, sleeping and living.⁹⁶ It is not only dwelling *per se* then that is deemed a counter conduct, but this dwelling *together*, in common; what Judith Butler calls “bodies gather[ing] as they do to express their indignation and to *enact their plural existence* in public space”.⁹⁷ This enactment counters advanced liberalism’s reduction of plural, or coexistence, to a simple copresence of pre-formed subjects, such that community “becomes an act of bringing together subjects and managing their copresence”.⁹⁸

In this sense, Occupy is tapping into something resistive about the very nature of community. Jean-Luc Nancy argues that community will always resist being put to work and instrumentalised because it refers to the very nature of existence as plural: that existence is necessarily co-existence.⁹⁹ Such co-existence is unruly and will always exceed the purposes or programmes that may seek to channel, confine and use it; rather it only exists in the performance of plurality, of communication.¹⁰⁰ This could be seen as a general characteristic of protest camps, that the everyday acts of materially coexisting mean protestors become “entangled in experiments in alternative ways of living together”, alternative articulations of community as a “home-place”.¹⁰¹ That which sets Occupy apart from other such camps, however, is its openness and inclusivity that the lack of an explicit aim, purpose or clear ideology, their refusal to articulate demands, makes possible.¹⁰² But what this performance of plurality does is theatrically expose the materiality of the city – the concrete ground, the fabric and plastic of tents, the metal of cooking pots – that forms our communication and community by operating “between us”,¹⁰³ enabling and producing protestors’ exposure to each other.

Perhaps in this sense it is Occupy Hong Kong that offered the most interesting enactment of plural existence by deliberately making the public space of protest appear as a private space of domesticity. This was facilitated by the material space of that particular occupation. As Katherine Brickell notes and illustrates with photographs, this “domestic practice rendered overtly public” takes shape around the paraphernalia of home (bookshelves, kitchen tables, flower

⁹⁶ Occupy LSX, “Welcome to Occupy London: Come, Enjoy, Discuss & Occupy”, <http://occupylsx.org> (2011), now available: <http://mappinglondon.co.uk/2011/london-a-year-in-maps/> (accessed 26 February 2014).

⁹⁷ Butler, “For and Against Precarity”, *op. cit.*, p. 12. Emphasis added.

⁹⁸ Odysseos, *op. cit.*, p. xxx.

⁹⁹ Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

¹⁰⁰ Gillian Rose, “Performing Inoperative Community: the Space and the Resistance of Some Community Arts Projects”, in Steven Pile and Michael Keith (eds.), *Geographies of Resistance* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 188.

¹⁰¹ Feigenbaum et al., *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁰² Harcourt, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

¹⁰³ Martin Coward, “Between Us in the City: Materiality, Subjectivity, and Community in the Era of Global Urbanization”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 30 (2012), p. 479.

arrangements), while occupying the covered plaza beneath the headquarters of HSBC.¹⁰⁴ The photographs on the Occupy Hong Kong website and blog¹⁰⁵ appear to be designed as family portraits, or groups of friends, posed around kitchen tables and in front of book shelves without clear signs of a background protest. Occupy Hong Kong thus blurs the lines between public and private, between community/family and society, between the domestic and the corporate, in a performance of belonging, the familial and the communal.

But how much of a counter-conduct is Occupy's version of community? After all, "community" here is still being put to use. It is still being instrumentalised in many accounts – as a way of producing change, as a way of providing mutual aid, as a way of making a better, more "authentic" world.¹⁰⁶ In fact, it is making use of something that it is part and parcel of the urban: the chance encounter¹⁰⁷ and the unexpected interaction with a stranger,¹⁰⁸ the surprise revelation of an originary but non-essentialist co-existence.¹⁰⁹ Occupy exists on the fringes of, but makes use of and bolsters part of the global city's narrative of itself. Indeed, this is not the only way that Occupy's experimentation in communal living both undermines and bolsters advanced liberalism's effect of governing through community. For example, by stressing the need for Occupy Wall Street to reach out to "communities of color",¹¹⁰ those communities are separated and reified in a similar way to the strategising logic of urban planning. By meditating on the "difference in experience between the Occupy movement and communities of color" regarding issues such as incarceration and police brutality, but stressing the need to "connect the dots" and "foster critical solidarity" between the two,¹¹¹ a *lack* of coexistence, an originary absence of connection is presupposed through the attempt to produce a different world. Whatever community Occupy produces in the pages of Tidal is obviously separate from other "resistant populations" such as those "communities of color".¹¹²

Furthermore, some of Occupy's best "community" work in the US since the forcible closure of "Liberty Plaza" could be seen to reinforce the advanced liberal technique of governing via the autonomisation and responsabilisation of community. After Hurricane Sandy had devastated the

¹⁰⁴ Katherine Brickell, "Geopolitics of Home", *Geography Compass*, Vol. 6, No. 10 (2012), p. 584.

¹⁰⁵ Available: www.occupycentralhk.com (accessed 26 February 2014).

¹⁰⁶ See Tremlett, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

¹⁰⁷ Merrifield, *op. cit.*, p. 916.

¹⁰⁸ Amin and Thrift, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

¹⁰⁹ See Odysseos, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁰ Mutant Legal, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

¹¹¹ Jen Waller and Tom Hintze, "Notes: The War on Dissent, the War on Communities", *tidal: occupy theory, occupy strategy. Year II*, Issue 3 (September 2012), p. 18.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

East Coast of the United States, Occupy Sandy helped set up the “You Are Never Alone” Clinic in aid of the socially and economically marginalised groups on the Rockaway Peninsula. This clinic, set up in a former fur shop, offered free, no questions-asked medical care to anyone who came through its doors. It was so successful that both FEMA and the Red Cross began referring patients to them, demonstrating Occupy’s stepping in to care for those abandoned by the state and existing charities.¹¹³ Writing in *Tidal*, Nastaran Mohrit claims that while FEMA’s failure showed the “system’s inhumanity”, Sandy made the Rockaways a “transformative space” in which “expressing our potential to care for one another was in itself a revolutionary act”. However, if we see this less as a revolutionary act and more as a counter-conduct, we reveal the way in which it works to reaffirm and shore up the advanced liberal government in its apparent inhumanity. Where we observe an act of selfless care and mutual aid-giving we also see the discourse of “community resilience”,¹¹⁴ whereby the state (through FEMA) steps back, making autonomous communities responsible for their own security, welfare and recovery from natural disasters. Far from a revolutionary act, the counter-conduct of caring for the dispossessed of the Rockaways bolsters and supports the system’s inhumanity by stepping in when it purposefully “fails”. Occupy assists the deliberate break down of advanced liberal government, making it less a failure of government and rather more a successful internalisation of the ethos, norms and values of an instrumentalised community. Nonetheless, there remains something hopeful in this form of counter-conduct that signifies another version of community, something less purely instrumental, more open and responsive to vulnerability without denigrating it.

We must also include a temporal (as well as spatial) element to this rethinking and reworking of community. While it is frequently the case that we see community as something that develops and flourishes over time as ties of belonging and care are built through generations, Occupy suggests the value of community to be far more fleeting and momentary. Thus, as Occupy Wall Street developed over the few months it was “in place” at Zucotti Park, it increasingly took on aspects of conducting conduct that it may have sought to counter. While it was claimed by occupiers that there was “no state, no law” or police within the camp, only “individual responsibility and accountability”,¹¹⁵ this responsibility and accountability *came to be* policed in a variety of ways. A range of hand signals kept order at general assembly meetings (with rolling arms meaning ‘wrap it up’ and crossed arms used to ‘block’ an intervention,¹¹⁶ whilst the

¹¹³ Mohrit, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-5.

¹¹⁴ See Filippa Lentzos and Nikolas Rose, “Governing Insecurity: Contingency Planning, Protection, Resilience”, *Economy and Society*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2009), pp. 230-254; Bulley, “Governing Community (Through) Resilience”, *op. cit.*

¹¹⁵ Suzahn E., *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹¹⁶ See illustration in Feigenbaum et al., *op. cit.*, p. 150.

infamous “human mic” acted as a form of control, preventing involvement, becoming “a command, an order, a call to attention.”¹¹⁷ More direct forms of control also operated. Christopher Berk, a doctoral student and participant observer who spent several nights in October 2011 at Occupy Wall Street joined the “security committee” on its midnight shift controlling sections of the park. Four “hot spot” areas (within a camp of 3,100 square metres) had been designated the night of his patrol, and in Berk’s area alone there were five incidents that required “intervention” including a fight and a theft necessitating one expulsion.¹¹⁸

While the need for policing and securing the Occupy community is not a surprise, it rather shows that as the occupation reached its second and third month its openness and horizontality required tempering, discipline and, ultimately, exclusion. These forms of control remained public, transparent and challengeable, yet for all its revolutionary ardour, Occupy remained ambivalent, a “border-element” within the system of control it sought to counter. Perhaps the best example of temporally limiting Occupy’s reworking of community came in the satirical report from the last days of Occupy Wall Street by *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*.¹¹⁹ Occupiers interviewed by the show claimed that the longer the camp continued, the more it “segregated” into two separate communities: the “college hipsters”, with a library and Apple pop-up store, who try to “rule” the camp from “uptown”; and the “poor people’s encampment”, or downtown “ghetto”. In a move steeped in irony, the “uptown” action groups and committees developing proposals for the general assembly had taken to meeting in the comparative quiet and calm of the Deutsche Bank building on Wall Street. Whilst the reassertion of racial and class divisions cannot dismiss the revisioning of community and plural existence that Occupy sought to enact, it does remind us of its temporal limits as well as advanced liberalism’s ability to “take up” counter-conducts in various ways to bolster itself.¹²⁰ As Sitrin points out, the ties created in Occupy “can be some of the most beautiful and solidarious [*sic*] that we ever experience. They can also be the most fleeting”.¹²¹

CONCLUSION

Occupy is slippery. It eludes totalising statements and claims, escaping our grasp and contesting even the possibility of seeing “it” as any thing at all. Common claims that it is an anarchist

¹¹⁷ Harcourt, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹¹⁸ Christopher Berk in Harcourt, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹¹⁹ Broadcast on 16 November 2011.

¹²⁰ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215.

¹²¹ Sitrin, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

movement,¹²² for example, whether “prefigurative” or otherwise, are exploded by Occupy’s internal diversity.¹²³ In this sense, viewing Occupy through the lens of counter-conducts is helpful in directing our attention away from an immediate focus on the agent that resists (the “it”) and towards the modes of control and government which are redirected by material practices of Occupation. Attending to these forms of control also casts doubt on the potential of conceptualising Occupy as ever properly “autonomous”.¹²⁴ Bernard E. Harcourt helpfully suggests instead that these practices are a form of *political* as opposed to *civil* disobedience. Civil disobedience, as we know, accepts existing political structures and institutions, but resists the moral authority of certain laws that emerge from them; it therefore respects the penalty that comes from disobeying those laws. In contrast, political disobedience “resists the very way in which we are governed”:

The Occupy movement rejected conventional political rationality, discourse and strategies. It did not lobby Congress. It defied the party system. It refused to align or identify itself along traditional lines. It refused even to formulate a reform agenda or to endorse the platform of any existing political group. Defying convention, it embraced the idea of being leaderless and adopted rhizomic, nonhierarchical governing structures. And it turned its back on conventional political ideologies. Occupy Wall Street was politically disobedient to its core; it even resisted attempts to be categorized. The Occupy movement confounded our traditional understandings and predictable political categories.¹²⁵

Examined through counter-conducts we find plenty of evidence to support these claims about political disobedience, supplementing his analysis by showing the way Occupy disobeyed conventional uses to urban space and community. But such a frame also adds nuance and tempers the potential romanticisation of Occupy contained in Harcourt’s argument. This is achieved by firstly directing our attention to the specific forms of conduct being opposed; those that I focused on being the use of space to promote free (and safe) circulation and the use of community to govern populations through their own values and principles. Thus, secondly we see that counter-conducts concentrate on both opposing the way urban populations’ conduct is conducted, but also reassessing the values they internalise and conduct themselves – the

¹²² See, for example, Morgan Rodgers Gibson, ‘The Anarchism of the Occupy Movement’, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48 (2013), pp. 335-348.

¹²³ Useful evidence of this is provided by Juris, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

¹²⁴ A formulation hinted at by *Tidal*’s invocation of Bey’s TAZ, and returned to several times in Juris, *op. cit.*

¹²⁵ Harcourt, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

productive and consumption based circulation and the instrumentalisation of community. Thirdly, we are unsurprised if counter-conducts are mundane and everyday, focusing on immobility or different rhythms and paces of movement and the materiality of being-together. And finally, and perhaps most significantly, a counter-conduct perspective moderates Harcourt's claims, showing that Occupy's resistance is always disobedient *and* obedient, supporting *as well as* subverting the way conduct is governed through the spatial and communal in global cities. It reveals the manner in which Occupy's attempts to use space differently and create a caring, less instrumental and heavily governed form of community are also "taken up" by advanced liberalism's tactics of security, autonomy and responsibility. If they are "interstitial" practices, operating in the cracks and fissures of dominant power structures, they are not all governed by wider "strategies" for emancipation,¹²⁶ nor do they ever fully escape the forms of control they simultaneously work to support.

Perhaps the balance of my argument has been weighted a little too much toward the obedience, with less emphasis on the disobedience. Jodi Dean has noted that while the aim of Occupy may be to occupy everything, we in fact already occupy everything.¹²⁷ Likewise, urban populations already occupy the city; occupation in itself is never necessarily disobedient. But the aim, Dean argues, must be to occupy it "differently". Something of the complexities and opportunities of occupying cities differently, according to different logics and ways of being have also, I hope, been drawn out in this article. Perhaps we can see something in Occupy that Nancy observed in the ultimate failure of the 1968 protests in Paris. Its potentiality, he suggested, lay in the "unprecedented and blinding" possibility of "an entirely different notion of being-together", not in ultimately achieving anything, but in "co-presence alone".¹²⁸ Therein perhaps lies the unfulfilled and unfulfillable future to come of Occupy, in forging a co-existential vision of space in the global city that is not instrumentalised, reduced to mere circulating co-presence or put to work for the 1%.

¹²⁶ For a broader discussion of interstitial activities and strategies, as well as the differences between the two, see Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias* (London: Verso, 2010), pp. 322-327.

¹²⁷ Jodi Dean, "Claiming Division, Naming a Wrong", *Theory & Event*, Vol. 14, No. 4S (2011).

¹²⁸ Jean-Luc Nancy, *A Finite Thinking* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 306.